

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims (~~strikethrough~~ indicating deletion and underline indicating insertion) as follows:

1. (currently amended) A lancing device for collecting a sample of body fluid from a sampling site on the skin of a subject, said lancing device comprising an outer body housing and a lancet, the lancet being movable between a first position within the outer body housing and a second position wherein at least a sharp tip portion of the lancet extends through an opening in the outer body housing, and wherein the opening in the outer body housing has a ~~non-circular~~cross-shaped periphery comprising a ~~plurality of four~~ inwardly directed lobes and four outwardly directed lobes.
2. (currently amended) The lancing device of Claim 1, wherein the periphery of the opening is non-planar, with the inwardly and outwardly directed lobes projecting out of alignment with a reference plane coincident with an overall forward surface of the lancing device housing.
3. (original) The lancing device of Claim 1, further comprising a raised rim around the opening.
4. (original) The lancing device of Claim 1, wherein the opening is generally cross-shaped, comprising four lobes.
5. (original) The lancing device of Claim 1, wherein the opening is generally star-shaped, comprising five lobes.
6. (original) The lancing device of Claim 1, wherein the lobes are smoothly-rounded.
7. (original) The lancing device of Claim 1, wherein the lobes comprise teeth with sharp points.
8. (original) The lancing device of Claim 7, comprising at least one outwardly-projecting, non-planar lobe having a sharply-pointed distal tip.

9. (original) The lancing device of Claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the outer body housing near the opening comprises a transparent material.
10. (original) The lancing device of Claim 1, wherein the opening has an inside dimension that is smaller than a corresponding outside dimension of the lancet, thereby preventing the lancet from becoming stuck in the opening.
11. (currently amended) An endcap for a lancing device, said endcap comprising a first end for connection to the lancing device, and a second end defining an opening through which a sharp tip of a lancet can pass, the opening having a non-circular periphery comprising a plurality of inwardly and outwardly directed lobes, wherein the plurality of inwardly and outwardly directed lobes are projected inwardly or outwardly relative to a reference plane coincident with an overall forward surface of the endcap.
12. (original) The endcap of Claim 11, wherein the periphery of the opening is non-planar.
13. (original) The endcap of Claim 11, further comprising a raised rim around the opening.
14. (original) The endcap of Claim 11, wherein the opening is generally cross-shaped, comprising four lobes.
15. (original) The endcap of Claim 11, wherein the opening is generally star-shaped, comprising five lobes.
16. (original) The endcap of Claim 11, wherein the lobes are smoothly-rounded.
17. (original) The endcap of Claim 11, wherein the lobes comprise teeth with sharp points.
18. (original) The endcap of Claim 17, comprising at least one outwardly-projecting, non-planar lobe having a sharply-pointed distal tip.

19. (original) The endcap of Claim 11, further comprising a transparent portion near the opening.

20. (currently amended) A method for acquiring an increased volume of analytic fluid from a sampling site, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a lancing device with an endcap defining a non-circular opening,

wherein the endcap defines a non-circular opening comprising a plurality of inwardly and outwardly directed lobes that are projected inwardly or outwardly relative to a reference plane coincident with an overall forward surface of the endcap of the lancing device;

placing the lancing device against the skin so that the skin is in communication with the non-circular opening;

applying sufficient pressure on the lancing device to cause tension upon the skin within the non-circular opening;

triggering the lancing device; and

continuing to apply pressure upon the skin with the lancing device while fluid is extracted from the sampling site.

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) A method of reducing the sensation of pain by a subject during a lancing procedure, said method comprising contacting a skin surface at or adjacent a sampling site with an irregular lobed contact surface, wherein the step of contacting a skin surface at or adjacent a sampling site with an irregular lobed contact surface comprises contacting the skin surface with at least one outwardly-projecting, non-planar lobe having a sharply-pointed distal tip, wherein the at least one outwardly-projecting, non-planar lobe is projected outwardly relative to a reference plane coincident with an overall forward surface of the endcap of the lancing device.

23. (previously presented) A lancing device comprising a four-lobed, cross-shaped opening through which a lancet tip passes upon actuation of the lancing device.
24. (previously presented) The lancing device of Claim 23, wherein the four-lobed, cross-shaped opening has smoothly rounded corners.
25. (previously presented) The lancing device of Claim 23, wherein the lobes of the cross-shaped opening are non-planar.